



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE arrests 375 gang members & associates in two-week enforcement action *Chicago accounts for 12 arrests made during nationwide crackdown*

CHICAGO – Twelve members of violent street gangs were arrested in the Chicago area and face deportation as part of a two-week nationwide operation netting more than 375 gang members and associates in 23 states. The operation, which culminated yesterday, was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in a joint effort with local law enforcement agencies.

The arrests were the latest under “Operation Community Shield,” a comprehensive initiative launched by ICE roughly one year ago to disrupt and dismantle transnational, violent street gangs in the United States. Over the past year, ICE has conducted several targeted enforcement actions under Operation Community Shield, including the recent one. In total, these efforts have resulted in the arrest of 2,388 members of 239 different gangs. Roughly 51 of the individuals were gang leaders. Approximately 922 of those arrested were from the violent street gang Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13). Those arrested under Operation Community Shield are either prosecuted criminally or removed from the country through immigration proceedings.

In the latest enforcement action, which began on Feb. 24 and continuing until yesterday, ICE agents teamed up with law enforcement partners to target gang members in 23 states. The largest number of arrests occurred in Dallas (44), San Diego (41), Washington, D.C. (22), Miami (22), and Raleigh (19). Gang members were also arrested in locations such as Sioux Falls, S.D.; Des Moines, Iowa; and Springfield, Mo.

On Feb. 26 and 27, Chicago ICE agents arrested eleven gang members in Chicago, West Chicago, Elgin, Northfield, Prospect Heights and Wheeling. An additional gang member was located in state prison and will be turned over to ICE custody upon his release. All are Mexican nationals who belong to the following gangs: Spanish Cobras, Sureño 13, and Spanish Gangster Disciples. Nine of those arrested have criminal convictions for crimes including battery, burglary, aggravated battery of a child and drug possession. Five of the gang members arrested were placed on a government flight to Mexico today, and the remainder are in ICE custody pending deportation.

Those arrested in the Chicago area include:

Twice deported Spanish Gangster Disciple with multiple convictions -

Abel Mendoza-Dominguez, 45, is a Mexican national and self-admitted member of the Spanish Gangster Disciples street gang. ICE agents, with the assistance of the Prospect Heights Police Dept., arrested Mendoza-Dominguez Feb. 27. Mendoza-Dominguez was twice deported from the U.S. in 1984 and 1993 and has a lengthy criminal record, including convictions in Cook County for aggravated battery, battery, burglary, domestic battery and aggravated battery of a child. He was deported today to Mexico on a government flight.



Gang member convicted of unlawful use of a weapon, battery -

Herminio Salgado-Sanchez, a 31-year-old illegal alien, was arrested by ICE agents in Wheeling Feb. 27 after being identified by the Prospect Heights Police Dept. gang unit as an associate member of the Spanish Gangster Disciples. He has an “SGD” tattoo on one arm and convictions in Cook County for unlawful use of a weapon (knife) and battery. He also has arrests for domestic battery, criminal trespass, drug possession and violation of bail bond.



“Violent street gangs and their members commit crimes, terrorize our communities, and pose a serious threat to public safety,” said ICE Special Agent-in-Charge Elissa Brown. “ICE will use its unique law enforcement resources to target violent gang members, and ultimately remove them from the country to help keep our communities safe.”

ICE teamed up with state and local law enforcement officers around the nation in this operation. In the Chicago area ICE agents worked closely with numerous local police department tactical gang units to target foreign-born gang members.

About Operation Community Shield

Operation Community Shield was launched in February 2005 after a threat assessment by all ICE field offices identified MS-13 as one of the largest and most violent street gangs in the United States. The assessment found that most of the gang members were foreign-born, in the United States illegally, had prior criminal convictions, and/or were involved in crimes that made them subject to ICE’s broad immigration and customs authorities.

ICE kicked off Operation Community Shield with an enforcement operation that resulted in the arrest of more than 100 members of MS-13. In the months that followed, ICE agents nationwide joined ranks and continued targeting MS-13 members in their jurisdictions. In May 2005, ICE expanded Operation Community Shield to include all criminal street gangs and prison gangs with foreign-born members.

Thus far, ICE agents from 76 field offices, working with law enforcement agencies nationwide, have arrested a total of 2,388 suspected street gang members and associates. These apprehensions include 533 criminal arrests and 1,855 administrative arrests. More than 1,075 of these suspects have violent criminal histories. As part of the operation, ICE agents have also seized more than 117 firearms.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.